data sources 108 such as a computer database having stored navigation data.

The flight plan entry field may either be implemented within a conventional CDU or MCDU system, or may be implemented within a graphical display. In this embodiment, multiple text identifiers can be entered into a single flight plan entry field 114a. Once the flight plan entry field 114a contains the desired completed text (e.g., corresponding to a waypoint, airway or procedure), the operator can accept the entry, cancel the entry or begin entering the next identifier. In a text-based flight management system which includes a CDU or MCDU, the operator can accept the entered text by pressing a line select key (such as item 16 shown in Figure 1). In graphically oriented flight management systems, the operator can accept or cancel the entered text by use of a cursor control device or by the keyboard 104. When the operator cancels the change, the computer 106 controls the display 112 to discard the entered text identifier and wait for the next action (e.g., enter a new text identifier). When the operator accepts the change, the computer 106 controls the display 112 to display the new text identifier, and the computer 106 modifies the aircraft's flight-plan such that the new flight-plan rejoins the previous flight-plan stored in the flight management system or results in a "hole" or disconnect in the flight plan (appropriate in some circumstances). This embodiment provides the advantage of reducing the number of keystrokes required to enter multiple waypoints into the aircraft's FMS.

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In another embodiment of the present invention as illustrated in Figure~~s 3a-~~ 3~~f~~, as the operator enters the initial text identifier 104a on the keyboard, the computer means 106 controls the display 114 to display the character typed in the flight plan entry field 114a and also compares the entered character against the first

character of known text identifiers previously stored within the database 108.

Based on locating similar text entered, the computer means selects the most likely text identifier 104a from the database that matches that letter and automatically displays a complete text identifier 104a in the flight plan entry field 114a. Thus, as seen in Figure 4a, if an operator enters the text "H,", the computer means 106 searches data source 108 for the likely text identifier and controls the display 114 to display the complete, likely text identifier. As the aircraft operator enters additional text identifiers 104a into the flight plan entry field 114a (such as seen in Figures 4b and 4c), the computer 106 continues to compare the entered characters typed against those corresponding sequential text identifiers previously stored within the database 108. Based on locating similar text characters, the computer means 108 selects the most likely complete text identifier 104a from the database that matches the letters entered and automatically refreshes the complete text identifier in the flight plan entry field 114a as seen in Figures 3~~b and 3c~~. This process may otherwise be known as smart text entry or automatic complete text entry into a flight plan entry field.

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Once the flight plan entry field 114a contains the desired text (e.g., corresponding to a waypoint, airway or procedure), the operator can either accept the entry or begin entering the next identifier 114a. In older text-based flight management systems which includes a CDU or MCDU, the operator can accept the entered text by pressing a line select key (such as item 16 shown in Figure 1). In newer graphically oriented flight management systems, the operator can accept the entered text by a cursor control device or by the keyboard 104. In each case, the computer means determines that the most likely waypoint or text identifier is the